

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A filament-wound tank portion of an electric water heater has a wall opening through which an electric heating element of other structure extends into the interior of the tank. The opening is reinforced by a stacked series of single layer, open weave patch members which are interdigitated with layers of the filament winding and through which the opening extends. The filament winding and the patches are impregnated with and intersecured by a cured resin material. As an alternative to cutting portions of the patches during formation of the tank wall opening, the patches may be provided with suitable pre-formed openings with reinforced peripheries, the subsequently formed tank wall opening extending through these reinforced, pre-formed patch openings. The single layer, open weave patches are also utilized to reinforce other types of filament-based tank wall structures.